



Bureau of Barbering & Cosmetology

Methyl Methacrylate Monomer (MMA) Fact Sheet

APRIL 2002

CONSUMER INFORMATION SHEET

Consumers getting artificial nails should consider the following:

- In 1974, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) identified Methyl Methacrylate Monomer (MMA) as a hazardous and injurious substance and prohibited its use as an adhesive in cosmetic nail products.
- MMA has not been “banned” for all usage use since it has legitimate applications in the medical and dental industries and in the manufacturing of resins and plastics. However, MMA is not approved for, and may not be used in the application of artificial nails.
- The side effects of exposure to MMA include irritation to mucous membranes (nose & throat), headaches, and adverse skin reactions.
- MMA is so strong that when an artificial nail is jammed or caught, instead of falling harmlessly off the natural nail, it holds tight, causing painful breaks or tears. In the most severe cases, there could be permanent damage, including the loss of the natural nail.
- MMA is difficult to detect, because it looks like other liquids (monomers) used to create artificial nails. However, consumers should watch for the following warning signs:
 - Very strong and strange odor, different from regular acrylic nail products;
 - Very hard nails that are difficult to file;
 - Artificial nails that will not soak off in solvents.

It is a violation of California Bureau of Barbering & Cosmetology regulations for MMA to be used in a salon.

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- It is a violation of Bureau of Barbering & Cosmetology regulations for MMA to be used in a salon.
- Consumers should feel free to ask their manicurist about the products they're using. If they're not comfortable with what they're told, or the manicurist refuses to tell them what products are being used, they should leave and find another manicurist to provide the service.

Role of the Bureau of Barbering & Cosmetology

- The Bureau of Barbering and Cosmetology licenses and regulates the professions of barbering, cosmetology, electrology, esthetics, manicuring, and establishments where these services are performed. Anyone who, for a fee, provides a service including, but not limited to, hair cutting, hairdressing, nail care, skin care, removal of superfluous hair, permanent removal of unwanted hair, and the application of make-up must be licensed by this Bureau.
- The Bureau also regulates health and safety issues in schools approved by the Bureau.
- The Bureau handles consumer complaints involving gross negligence and/or incompetence; unsanitary conditions in salons, barbershops, and schools of barbering, cosmetology, and electrology; unlicensed practice of barbering, cosmetology, and electrology; operation of unlicensed salons or barbershops; and misrepresentation or false advertising of services.

How to Contact the Bureau

- If consumers believe they have received artificial nail services with products containing MMA, or they know of a salon using MMA, they should file a complaint with the Department of Consumer Affairs. Start the process online by visiting the Bureau's Web site **www.dca.ca.gov/barber**, or call the Consumer Information Center toll-free at **1-800-952-5210** and request a complaint form.